

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00
NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00
USIE-00 INRE-00 MCT-01 ACDA-07 NEAE-00 DHA-02 ORM-02
AID-05 SCA-01 IO-13 /093 W
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O P 141642Z FEB 77
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3061
INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVE PRIORITY 220
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER
USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM
CINCUSNAVEUR, LONDON ENG
CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GER
CIA WASHDC
COMSIXTHFLT
COMPHIBRON SIX
COM THREE FOUR MAU
CTF SIX ZERO
CTF SIX ONE
CTF SIX TWO
CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO
FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA
FOSIF ROTA SPAIN
DIA WASHDC
CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GER
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 0659

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MILI, PINS, PINT, LE
SUBJECT: LEBANESE SITUATION FEBRUARY 12-14

REF: BEIRUT 0628 (DTG 111501Z FEB 77)

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1. SUMMARY. THE SIT REMAINS TENSE NEAR THE SABRA REFUGEE CAMP IN WEST BEIRUT. A SYRIAN UNIT HAS REPORTEDLY MOVED NORTH AWAY FROM NABATIYAH, WHILE SOME PERSONNEL OF THE LEB INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES (ISF) HAVE REPORTEDLY MOVED SOUTH. THE QUADRIPARTITE COMMITTEE ENDED ITS MEETINGS

BUT NOT ITS BUSINESS ON FEB 12. THE CABINET HAS ISSUED A DECREE AIMED AT INDUCING MIL OFFICERS TO RETIRE. THE KFUR FRONT HOPES TO GIVE

SECRETARY OF STATE VANCE A MEMO ASKING THE "WESTERN POWERS" TO GUARANTEE THE INDEPENDENCE AND CULTURAL PLURALITY OF LEB. SOVIET DIPLOMAT MIKHAIL STYENKO WILL VISIT LEB ON FEB 20. AN NBC CORRESPONDENT WAS FIRED ON NEAR NABATIYAH. END SUMMARY.

2. SABRA/CHATILA STILL TENSE. THE SIT REMAINS TENSE NEAR THE SABRA AND CHATILA REFUGEE CAMPS, ALTHOUGH THERE HAS BEEN NO FIGHTING SINCE THE EVENING OF FEB 11. EMB SOURCES REPORT SOME CIVILIANS BEGAN TO LEAVE SABRA ON FEB 13. DURING THE MORNING OF FEB 14, SYRIAN ASF TROOPS

ERECTED BARRICADES ENFORCING TIGHT SECURITY AROUND THEIR ARTILLERY AND TANK POSITIONS NEAR THE CAMPS. SUCH PRECAUTIONS IN THE PAST HAVE BEEN AN INDICATION OF IMMINENT HOSTILITIES. ACCORDING TO THE VOICE OF PALESTINE, "ALL RESISTANCE FACTIONS" MET ON FEB 11 TO "DISCUSS THE DEVELOPMENTS IN VIEW OF THE CONTINUED FIGHTING IN CERTAIN AREAS ADJOINING THE CAMPS." THE FACTIONS DECIDED TO REINFORCE PATROLS OF THE PALESTINIAN ARMED STRUGGLE COMMAND, FORM A JOINT FORCE "TO SUPERVISE THE CEASE-FIRE," AND BAN "ALL MIL MANIFESTATIONS," ACCORDING TO THE BROADCAST.

3. SYRIAN UNIT MOVES NORTH FROM NABATIYAH. ACCORDING TO LEB MIL INTEL SOURCES AND THE ASF STAFF OPERATIONS OFF, THE SYRIAN 531 BN MOVED NORTHWARD AWAY FROM THE NABATIYAH AREA TO THE VICINITY OF JAZZIN ON FEB 13.

4. ISF REPORTEDLY MOVES SOUTH. MIN OF INTERIOR SALAH SALMAN TOLD AN NAHAR ON FEB 11 THAT THE ISF HAS BEGUN DEPLOYING ITS UNITS TO "VARIOUS LEB DISTRICTS." SALMAN SAID THAT THE GOVT HAD ALREADY DESPATCHED A "REINFORCED ISF UNIT" TO TYRE, WOULD SOON SEND NEW UNITS
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TO AREAS NEAR TYRE, AND WOULD "REINFORCE" UNITS ALREADY IN THE SOUTH. SALMAN MADE NO EXPLICIT MENTION OF THE DESPATCH OF GENDARMES TO NABATIYAH, BUT DATT SOURCES STATE THAT ISF UNITS WERE SCHEDULED TO BEGIN MOVING TO THE NABATIYAH AREA ON FEB 14. THEY WILL NOT OPERATE IN LARGE UNITS, BUT WILL REINFORCE EXISTING TWO-THREE MAN POSTS WITH 10-12 MEN.

5. QUADRIPARTITE COMMITTEE HOLDS LAST MEETING. THE QUADRIPARTITE COMMITTEE APPARENTLY HELD ITS LAST MEETING ON FEB 12. BEIRUT RADIO ANNOUNCED THAT THE COMMITTEE HAD REACHED ITS "FINAL DECISION" ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 1969 CAIRO ACCORDS AND THUS "COMPLETED THE MISSION ENTRUSTED TO IT" BY THE 1976 RIYADH AND CAIRO SUMMIT MEETINGS.

NEVERTHELESS, MUCH UNFINISHED BUSINESS REMAINS. THE COMMITTEE AT ITS LAST MEETING, FOR EXAMPLE, "IMPRESSED ON THE COMMAND OF THE ARAB SECURITY FORCES (ASF) THE NEED TO SPEED UP THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RAIDS IN SEARCH OF HEAVY WEAPONS," ACCORDING TO A STATEMENT OF THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE (SEPTTEL).

6. EARLY MILITARY RETIREMENT. AS THE FIRST STEP IN PRES SARKIS' PROGRAM TO REBUILD THE ARMY, THE CABINET ON FEB 10 ISSUED A DECREE-LAW AIMED AT INDUCING OFFICERS TO RETIRE. THE DECREE-LAW PROVIDES THAT ANY

MIL OFF, REGARDLESS OF RANK OR YEARS OF SERVICE, MAY APPLY TO RETIRE ON A PENSION BASED ON THE SALARY AT HIS NEXT HIGHEST GRADE, IF HE IS NOT ALREADY DUE TO RETIRE IN 1977 AND 1978. THE GOVT MAY, HOWEVER, REJECT ANY APPLICATION AND MAY ALSO RETIRE, DISCHARGE, OR TRANSFER TO ANOTHER GOVT SERVICE ANY MILITARY OFFICER.

7. KFUR FRONT MEMORANDUM. LEADERS OF THE KFUR FRONT, INCLUDING CAMILLE

CHAMOUN, PIERRE GEMAYEL AND FATHER CHARBEL KASSIS, MET ON FEB 11 AND 12 TO DISCUSS THE MEMO WHICH THEY HOPE TO PRESENT TO SECRETARY OF STATE VANCE AND FRENCH FONMIN LOUUIS DE GUIRINGAUD (SEE FEB 7 SIT-REP). THE CHRISTIAN LEADERS RECOMMENDED THAT THE MEMO A) ASK THE "WESTERN POWERS" TO GUARANTEE THE EXISTENCE OF LEB WITH ITS "ETHNIC
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AND COMMUNAL PECULIARITIES;" B) STRESS THE NECESSITY OF RESETTLING PALESTINIAN REFUGEES IN ALL THE ARAB COUNTRIES; AND C) CALL FOR THE SEPARATION OF LEB AND GEN MID-EAST PROBLEMS, ACCORDING TO AN NAHAR.

8. TRAVELERS. MIKHAIL STYENKO, CHIEF OF THE NEAR EAST DEPT OF THE SOV MIN OF FON AFFAIRS, IS EXPECTED TO ARRIVE IN BEIRUT ON FEB 20. THE GRAND MUFTI, HASSAN KHALED, RETURNED TO BEIRUT ON FEB 12 AFTER A TWO-DAY VISIT TO DAMASCUS, WHERE HE MET WITH SYRIAN PRES ASAD. PRIMIN SELIM AL-HOSS, MIN OF INTERIOR SALAH SALMAN, PARLIAMENTARY SPEAKER KAMEL AL-ASSAD, AND FORMER PRIMIN SAEB SALAM ALL VISITED JORDAN TO ATTEND THE FUNERAL OF QUEEN ALIA.

9. NBC CORRESPONDENT UNDER FIRE. NBC CORRESPONDENT BILL LORD HAS TOLD US THAT HE WAS FIRED ON BY "MORTARS AND A 50-CALIBER MACHINE GUN" TWO MILES OUT OF NABATIYAH ON THE WAY TO MARJAYUN. LORD WAS FORCED TO ABANDON HIS CAR AND LOST HIS PASSPORT, BUT WAS NOT INJURED.
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